PHE 48/23.2 W555

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

HE PREMARITAL EXAMINATION FOR

SYPHILIS

ion of Genitoinfectious Diseases
Department of Health
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Q. WHEN DOES THIS LAW GO INTO EFFECT?

A. May 17, 1940.

Q. WHO MUST UNDERGO THIS TEST?

A. Both applicants for a marriage license.

Q. WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?

A. Before applying for a license, both applicants must visit a physician and request an examination, which must include a blood test for syphilis. Both need not go to the same physician, but it is important that each informs the physician that a premarital test is desired.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

A. The physician, in addition to making an examination, takes a blood specimen for examination at an approved laboratory. This specimen is sent to the laboratory by the physician. Usually, a wait of about ten days is necessary before the report will be returned from the laboratory. Therefore, applicants for marriage should allow approximately two weeks' time between the examination and the application for marriage in order to be on the safe side.

Q. IF THE REPORT COMES BACK NEGATIVE, CAN THE MARRIAGE BE PERFORMED AT ONCE?

A. If the report is negative, the applicants then receive statements from the physician stating the requirements of the premarital syphilis examination law have been fulfilled and that a license can be issued. There is no further obstacle so far as this is concerned. The applicants then take the statements to the marriage license clerk. The law states that the examination must be made within thirty days of the issuance of the marriage license. Inasmuch as a three day interval between the application and the issuance of the license must be allowed, it is suggested that the statements of the physician be filed and application for marriage license be made as soon after the receipt of the physician's statement as possible.

Promptness will insure complete compliance with the State law and prevent disappointment. If there are no other reasons why the license should not be issued (such as insanity and indigency) the license will be received. This marriage license may be used any time within sixty days after its issuance.

Q. WILL THE MARRIAGE LICENSE CLERK KNOW WHETHER AN APPLICANT HAS SYPHILIS?

A. No, not the slightest indication will be given to the clerk. If the physician does not give an applicant the statement (certificate) there will be no use in applying for one; the clerk will not issue a license. The clerk will have no way of knowing that the applicant was denied a statement by the physician unless the applicant tells it.

Q. WHAT IF THE TEST IS POSITIVE?

A. If, in addition to the positive test, the physician finds evidence leading him to believe syphilis exists in a communicable form, he cannot give a statement to the applicant.

Q. IS THERE ANY EXCEPTION?

A. Yes. Even though the physician discovers syphilis in the applicant, he may still issue a statement if he determines that the disease is present in a non-communicable stage.

Q. IS THERE ANY APPEAL FROM THE PHYSICIAN'S DECISION?

A. The law states that any patient who has been denied a statement by the examining physician can appeal to the State Department of Health for a review of his or her case. After proper investigation, the Department of Health either issues or refuses to issue a statement to the marriage license clerk.

Q. IS THERE AN APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT?

A. An act approved July 24, 1913, provides "for a hearing by the Orphans' Court in those cases when the right to a license is not made to appear." This act is still in force.

"Good Personal Health Means Good Public Health In Any Community"

"STAMP OUT SYPHILIS"

For Further Information Con
Your Personal Physician
or
The Division of Genitoinfectious Di
State Department of Health
Harrisburg, Pa.